1:Gusinde--946 E-5 (1918-1924) 1937 5198 Yahgan 5198

/1030 cont./
play of forces in this ethnic group on the Cape Horn Archipelago now belongs to the past. /Fig. 88 appears here./

/1031/ Part 4

The Spiritual World of the Yamana

There was a time--not far back when people quite generally and as a matter of course inferred from the poverty and simplicity of the external arrangements and the objects used by a primitive people that they were lacking in ideas and that their spiritual world was limited. Ever since the Yamana were visited and superficially observed by European navigators, the entire cultured world has classed them among the most unworthy representatives of the human race on account of their inhospitable native land and the unfavorable conditions of their existence. Roskoff-49 and others often repeated: "The Fuegians are, according to Reinhold Forster's remarks, 'apparently the most miserable of all peoples.'" They were judged solely by what caught the eye and by the hasty first impression that their nakedness and unattractive appearance, their way of life, and their wild behavior inevitably makes upon every European. Once established, the general opinion became deeply entrenched and continued to be untouched by this or that report which sounded somewhat more favorable. How could such a report have brought about a complete change of the previously held view when the Yamana themselves did not change in any way externally!

It is not enough to evaluate a human group solely by what strikes the eye; for that reason modern ethnography in all seriousness desires penetration into the spiritual domain of every tribe.

Fig. 88. Diomedea exulans.

1: Gusinde--947 E-6 (1918-1924) 1937 SH6 Yahgan SH6

/1921 cont./

Unfortunately, the Europeans who had all kinds of opportunities to do this during their sojourn on the Cape Horn Archipelago did not fully meet this demand. In their defense it is willingly admitted that they were given no particular assignment to do this, nor were they specially prepared. The English missionaries, who, in retrospect, must be loudly praised for their exemplary zeal in the study of the Yamana language, strangely enough made almost no effort to gain a deeper understanding of the souls of these Indians, despite the fact that they lived with them for decades. A small residual group of survivors was already on the brink of the grave into which a once populous tribe had by now disappeared, when as yet no full account of their /1922/ spiritual endowment had been offered by reliable research and preserved for the history of humanity. Hence I chose to make it my most important task to rescue these treasures at the eleventh hour. No less a person than W. Schmidt (4):879 declares "that, as far as the spiritual culture of the Fuegians is concerned, [my] four expeditions alone surpass in quantity as well as quality of achievements all the work of the previous authors put together."

A number of favorable circumstances helped me in this work, and these will have to be mentioned in the proper place. In spite of decades of contact with a great many features of European culture, the Fuegians have retained the total content of their spiritual heritage, not only practically intact, but also in its pristine state. This shows that it was vital and irreplaceable for them, and that after it was lost the undisturbed continuance of the people as a whole was impossible. The Yamana themselves know what it was that held them together and what was guaranteed them by orderly, peaceable conditions of life; they called it simply "that which was handed down to us by our forefathers in the way of habits and customs." They were also sensitively aware that their doom would be sealed the moment they deviated from it or were prevented by outside influences from carrying on their tribal life according to the previous patterns.

I remained aware of my serious responsibility while undertaking the four expeditions into the Cape Horn region, and I ceaselessly tried to feel my way into the strange conceptual world of the Yamana. This required time and in this I was helped by the long free months away from Tierra del Fuego between the four separate

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

PREFACE

THIS account of the natives of Tierra del Fuego is the result of a three months' visit to the island, accompanied by Mr. J. Linzee Weld, during the summer of 1924–25. We studied Ona Indians at three settlements: one at the southeast corner of Lake Fagnano, one to the northeast of the same lake, and the third lying east of the Laguna de Pescados. Yahgan Indians were encountered at Tierra Mayor, Cambaceres bay, Gable island, and Puerto Mejillones on Navarin island.

Although the time available was short, aids to study were unusual. Thus, Cooper's "Bibliography" offered in a readily available form an accurate analysis of previous work, with an exception to be noted presently. Furthermore, the help of three intelligent white men—Messrs. Lucas and William Bridges and Fred. Lawrence,—all intimately acquainted with the Indian lore and languages, made it possible to procure accurate data with unusual celerity and facility. All the information thus obtained was checked by the Indians and vice versa, while just before I left the island Mr. William Bridges most kindly went over all my notes and vocabularies. Therefore I feel confident that they are detailed and accurate.

In planning my work, owing to the limited time available it seemed wise to concentrate on obvious and concrete problems which could be covered with reasonable thoroughness. Although the studies of Gusinde and Koppers[1] had not then appeared in print, I was told that they had worked chiefly on the religion, initiation ceremonies, folklore, and linguistics. Hence my most profitable course was to devote myself primarily to the material culture and technology. This decision was fostered by the fact that both tribes had been reduced almost to extinction by a recent epidemic of influenza, so that the older men who once took part in native rites had died almost without exception. Secondly, on Beagle channel a thorough examination of camp-sites was undertaken with a view of determining their nature and age so far as

[1] Consult the Bibliography in the appendix.

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
SH6 Yahgan SH6

was possible without extensive excavation. In addition, customs and ceremonial practices were noted as opportunity offered. In preparing this account of the Indians I have followed my own notes even when at variance with previous studies; yet I have tried to incorporate enough material gathered by other observers to present a reasonably complete picture, at least of the material culture.

Tierra del Fuego is a land where the frontier traditions of hospitality still reign, so that acknowledgment of the help received seems stiff and formal in the light of the generosity and kindness to be found there. To the Bridges family is due primarily the success of our trip and also a deep debt of gratitude not only for technical and material aid but for kindly hospitality and sumptuous fare on the justly famous Estancia Viamonte. My mouth still waters when I think of poached wild-goose eggs on mutton steak or *calafate* pie with clotted cream. Mr. John Goodall, manager of the *frigorifico* at Rio Grande, was also a most kindly host. At Harberton Captain and Mrs. Sigurd Nielson, Mrs. John Lundberg, their many children, and Mr. Eric Fugellie not only offered us their unstinted hospitality but supplied every facility for travel and work. At Remolino Mr. Fred. Lawrence was both my host and a mine of information. The American and Belgian consuls at Punta Arenas, Mr. John Sharp and Mr. Charles Kwasten, the latter our traveling companion southward from New York, gave us most useful advice and helped us ship our collections northward. Mr. John Williams of Punta Arenas furnished important information. Mr. Thomas Constenduros and Mr. R. H. Oerton motored us across vast stretches of southern Patagonia, while Mr. John Hamilton most kindly allowed us to inspect his large and important archeological collection. I have space to mention but a few of the many who went out of their way to be helpful to us, but to all I give my most sincere thanks. Most particularly I am indebted to Mr. J. Linane Weld for help and support under circumstances of many kinds and for genial companionship during many months in distant lands.

In this country, I wish to thank Mr. George G. Heye for the opportunity to take a most interesting journey and for making possible this publication. Mr. F. W. Hodge has both edited and aided in the preparation of the manuscript, as has also my wife. Prof. E. A. Hooton, assisted by Mr. Walter Cline and Miss Barbara Clark, have worked over all available data on somatology, while

3: Lothrop E-5 (1924-1925) 1928
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for savagery and ferocity, which their uncouth appearance and hardiness no little augmented. Indeed even today Tierra del Fuego is regarded by many of the world's inhabitants as a strange and romantic land, peopled by unmitigated cannibals, inhospitable, forlorn, and barren. The very distance of Tierra del Fuego from the places where most of us live is a gap not easily overleaped by the mind, and indeed this gap is not only geographical, but racial and cultural as well.

The very fundamentals of Europe, racially and culturally, have for the greater part come directly from the Asiatic continent, so that historians in a philosophic vein have assumed that the march of civilization is constantly westward. *Ex oriente lux.* However, the current anthropological viewpoint is that man developed his peculiar physical and his primitive cultural attributes within the continent of Asia, and, thus primed with hitherto unknown powers to survive and to perpetuate the species, expanded in all directions with great rapidity. This expansion we may liken to the ripples spreading from a stone dropped into a pond, and of such ethnocultural waves the first settlers of Europe and the Fuegians mark the marginal extremes in opposite directions. In other words, until the application of the compass made the ocean a highway instead of a barrier, the western Europeans and the Fuegians were the most widely separated peoples in the world.

[2] To students of human culture the Indians of Tierra del Fuego prove of unusual interest because with such tribes as the Tasmanians they are reputed among the world's most primitive inhabitants. Such isolated and backward peoples may exhibit, through cultural stagnation or degeneration, an early stage in the development of our own and of other complex civilizations. Moreover, the natives of Fuegia afford a clue as to the state of the first men to attain the shores of the Western Hemisphere.

GEOGRAPHY

[3] The term *Tierra del Fuego* is loosely applied to the large archipelago lying south of the mainland of South America; more strictly the name is assigned to the main island, shaped like an irregular triangle. It measures about 240 miles along the south coast, the base of the triangle, and 170 miles from north to south.

South of the main island, separated from it by the narrow waters of Beagle channel, are three large islands (Gordon, Hoste, Navarin).